

Message Text

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PAGE 01 PARIS 04378 201753Z

13

ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 IO-14 ISO-00 NIC-01 SAJ-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00

PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01

PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20 USIA-15 SAM-01 ACDA-19 AEC-11

AID-20 CEA-02 CIEP-02 COME-00 EB-11 FEA-02 FPC-01

INT-08 OMB-01 SCI-06 STR-08 TRSE-00 DRC-01 /212 W

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R 201645Z FEB 74

FM AMEMBASSY PARIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6956

INFO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

USMISSION NATO

USMISSION GENEVA

C O N F I D E N T I A L PARIS 4378

GENEVA FOR CSCE DEL

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, UF, FR

SUBJECT: VISIT OF SOVIET FOREIGN MINISTER GROMYKO

1. SUMMARY. ALTHOUGH GROMYKO'S VISIT, FEB 15-18, HAS BEEN TREATED BY FRENCH PRESS IN POSITIVE TERMS, PRELIMINARY EVIDENCE INDICATES THAT IT DID LITTLE TO IRON OUT THE ROUGH SPOTS IN FRENCH-SOVIET RELATIONS. END SUMMARY.

2. IMMEDIATELY AFTER HIS ARRIVAL THE 15TH, GROMYKO MET FOR MORE THAN TWO HOURS WITH PRESIDENT POMPIDOU. ON LEAVING THE ELYSEE, GROMYKO SAID IT HAD BEEN AGREED THAT THE BREZHNEV-POMPIDOU MEETING WOULD TAKE PLACE SOON. THIS STATEMENT WAS FOLLOWED BY AN OFFICIAL COMMUNIQUE THE NEXT DAY, STATING THAT THE MEETING WOULD TAKE PLACE "NEXT MARCH, PROBABLY AT THE BEGINNING OF THE CONFIDENTIAL CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 PARIS 04378 201753Z

MONTH." GROMYKO HAD THREE SESSIONS WITH FOREIGN MINISTER JOBERT AND A MEETING WITH PRIME MINISTER MESSMER

OVER THE WEEKEND. IN ADDITION STATE SECRETARY DE LIPKOWSKI ACCOMPANIED HIM ON A SIGHT-SEEING TOUR SUNDAY.

3. GROMYKO HELD A SHORT PRESS CONFERENCE JUST BEFORE HIS DEPARTURE THE 18TH. IN HIS OPENING STATEMENT, TEXT OF WHICH WAS FURNISHED TO US BY SOVIET EMBASSY, HE SAID HIS TALKS WITH FRENCH OFFICIALS HAD PROCEEDED "IN AN ATMOSPHERE WHICH CORRESPONDS TO THE NATURE OF THE RELATIONS BETWEEN OUR COUNTRIES, BETWEEN THE SOVIET AND FRENCH PEOPLES." GROMYKO STATED THAT HE HAD FOUND A COMMON LANGUAGE WITH THE FRENCH ON "MANY LARGE INTERNATIONAL PROBLEMS." HE SAID SEVERAL QUESTIONS OF EUROPEAN SECURITY WERE DISCUSSED, INCLUDING THE CSCE. ON THE MIDDLE EAST, HE REMARKED THAT FRENCH AND SOVIET POSITIONS WERE "CLOSE" REGARDING A SETTLEMENT, AND ADDED THAT FRANCE AND THE USSR WOULD MAINTAIN "EXTREMELY CLOSE CONTACTS AND CONDUCT CONSULTATIONS ON THIS PROBLEM" GROMYKO NOTED THAT HE HAD EXPLAINED THE SOVIET APPROACH TO THE ENERGY PROBLEM INCLUDING THAT OF OIL, AND SAID THAT THE SOVIETS FAVORED DISCUSSION OF IT "BY ALL INTERESTED SIDES." FINALLY, GROMYKO SAID THAT HE HAD INVITED JOBERT FOR AN OFFICIAL VISIT TO THE USSR AND THAT JOBERT HAD ACCEPTED.

4. IN ENSURING QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION, THE SOVIET FOREIGN MINISTER MET FRENCH CRITICISM HEAD ON BY DEFENDING OVER-ALL BENEFITS OF US-SOVIET RELATIONS. CHARACTERIZING US-SOVIET DETENTE AS "POSITIVE FOR INTERNATIONAL LIFE," HE DENIED THAT IT COULD HURT SOVIET FRENCH RELATIONS. "WE DON'T HAVE TWO POLICIES, ONE IN ONE POCKET FOR FRANCE AND ANOTHER IN ANOTHER POCKET FOR THE U.S.," HE CLAIMED. HE SAID THAT THE FRENCH SIDE HAD SHOWN A GREAT DEGREE OF UNDERSTANDING ON THIS SCORE, AND ADDED POINTEDLY HIS HOPE THAT IT WOULD CONTINUE. QUESTIONED ON FRENCH DEFENSE AND DISARMAMENT POLICY, GROMYKO REPLIED THAT "COMPLICATIONS AND DIFFERENCES CAN ARISE AMONG DIFFERENT COUNTRIES." HE NOTED THAT THE USSR SHARED FRENCH VIEWS ON THE ENERGY CRISIS, SUPPORTED AN UNGA MEETING ON RAW MATERIALS, AND FAVORED

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PAGE 03 PARIS 04378 201753Z

SYRIAN PARTICIPATION IN THE GENEVA CONFERENCE.

5. THE FRENCH PRESS HAS VIRTUALLY UNANIMOUSLY VIEWED THE GROMYKO VISIT AS SIGNALING AN IMPROVEMENT IN FRENCH-SOVIET RELATIONS. COMMENT HAS FOCUSED ON THE JUXTAPOSITION OF GROMYKO'S VISIT WITH THE FRENCH-US CONFRONTATION AT THE WASHINGTON ENERGY CONFERENCE, AND ON SOVIET PUBLIC INDICATIONS OF APPROVAL FOR THE FRENCH INDEPENDENT STAND. THE PRESS HAS SUGGESTED THAT THE SOVIETS HAVE REGAINED A STAKE IN PROMOTING TIES WITH FRANCE,

WHILE FRANCE SEEKS TO REDRESS THE BALANCE WITH THE US
BY REPAIRING RELATIONS WITH MOSCOW.

6. COMMENT. THE QUAI HAS PROMISED TO GIVE US A FULLER
READ-OUT ON THE VISIT AS SOON AS THE MEMCONS HAVE BEEN
APPROVED. BASED ON THE EVIDENCE AT HAND, HOWEVER, IT
SEEMS EVIDENT THAT WHILE THE TALKS WITH GROMYKO MAY
HAVE SERVED TO CLEAR THE AIR SOMEWHAT, MAJOR PROBLEMS
REMAIN BETWEEN PARIS AND MOSCOW. GROMYKO'S PRESS CON-
FERENCE STATEMENT WAS NOTABLY COOL, EVEN FOR HIM, FALL-
ING SHORT OF ACKNOWLEDGING THAT THE TALKS HAD EVEN
TAKEN PLACE IN A "BUSINESSLIKE", MUCH LESS A "FRIENDLY"
ATMOSPHERE. HE REPLIES TO QUESTIONS SUGGESTED
CONTINUED FRICTION OVER FRENCH "CONDOMINIUM" CHARGES,
DISARMAMENT AND DEFENSE POLICY, HINTING THAT QUESTIONS
SUCH AS MBFR AND PERHAPS FRENCH EC INITIATIVES MAY HAVE
BEEN RAISED UNDER THE "EUROPEAN SECURITY" RUBRIC. AMONG
SPECIFIC ISSUES, ONLY ON ENERGY POLICY DID GROMYKO
VOICE SUPPORT FOR FRENCH ACTIONS, AND HE ENDORSED THE
ALGERIAN UNGA PROPOSAL TO WHICH THE FRENCH HAVE NOW
LENT THEIR SUPPORT. HE ALSO MADE A SIGNIFICANT CONCES-
SION TO BITTER FRENCH COMPLAINTS OF NEGLECT, PROMISING
CLOSE CONTACTS AND CONSULTATIONS ON THE MIDDLE EAST.
INDEED, THIS AREA OF CONSULTATIONS IS ONE WHICH COULD
WELL LEND ITSELF TO AN ACCORD AT THE SUMMIT, IN THE
FORM PERHAPS OF AN ELABORATION OF THE OCT 13, 1970
PROTOCOL AND RENEWED PROMISE THAT ITS TERMS WILL BE
SCRUPULOUSLY RESPECTED. FURTHER REFINEMENT OF EXISTING
ECONOMIC, SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL AGREEMENTS MIGHT BE
ANOTHER CANDIDATE FOR SUMMIT ACTION.

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PAGE 04 PARIS 04378 201753Z

7. HOWEVER, IT IS REVEALING THAT THE EXACT DATES FOR
THE BREZHNEV-POMPIDOU MEETING HAE STILL NOT BEEN FIXED.
GRANTED THAT TECHNICAL SCHEDULING DIFFICULTIES COULD BE
RESPONSIBLE, ONE CANNOT ESAPE THE CONCUSION THAT THE
WAY WOULD BE SPEEDILY CLEARED FOR THIS LONG-HERALDED
AND REPEATEDLY ANNOUNCED ENCOUNTER IF THERE WAS SUFFI-
CIENT POLITICAL WILL AND INTEREST ON BOTH SIDES.
IRWIN

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